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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PETRI).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 24, 1999.

I hereby appoint the Honorable THOMAS E. PETRI to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PETRI). Pursuant to the order of the House of January 19, 1999, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

PARTNERSHIPS FOR A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT AND BETTER COMMUNITIES

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, since I was elected to Congress, I have been focusing on the issue of livable communities and how we can create better partnerships between the Federal Government and our citizens. Unfortunately, one of the obstacles we face is the efforts by some people to create false choices. Last week, we saw two examples here in Congress, one dealing with efforts to reduce gun vio-

lence, and the other an important environmental announcement by one of our leading auto companies.

Repeated throughout the discussion regarding guns in our communities have been people who have tried to paint very stark pictures that suggest that really there is nothing that we can do to take simple common sense steps. Hopefully, the action in the Senate indicated that there are things that we can do that bring people together that will make a difference. I am optimistic that we may be able to yet have that discussion on the floor of this House.

At the same time, we find people trying to paint these same sorts of false choices as it relates to the environmental community. Some argue that we have to work against business or manufacturing when the government seeks to improve the environment. This simply does not have to be the case. Last week we had an excellent example of what happens when companies recognize that they are partners in our efforts to protect the environment and improve air quality.

For the last 25 years, trucks and the SUVs have been allowed to produce 2.5 times as much smog-causing gas as cars, and next year, when stricter rules take place, these full-sized vehicles will be producing five times as much as cars under the new rules. Regulations for pickups and the sport utility vehicles were originally more lenient because they were used theoretically primarily by small business, yet today they comprise half of all family vehicles.

Last Monday, Ford Motor Company announced that starting with its model 2000 year, its full-sized pickup trucks will meet current pollution standards for cars. All but the largest will meet the stricter new car requirements as well as the proposed truck requirements that go into effect between the year 2002 and 2007. Ford made their an-

nouncement a week after a Federal appeals panel, in a radical departure from established judicial precedent, invalidated air quality regulations set by EPA which were designed, in part, to decrease ground level ozone, a major contributor to smog. If that ruling is upheld, efforts like Ford's will take on much more significance.

Ford is taking this initiative because they recognize that consumers want cars and trucks that are environmentally sound, and that by producing them, Ford will have a competitive advantage. Jacques Nasser, Ford's chief executive and president, said that Ford is doing this because it will benefit the company financially and because "it is the right thing to do."

As the use of pickup trucks and SUVs has increased, so has the amount of smog-producing gas they produce. Manufacturers cleaning up their trucks will allow for cleaner air and easier breathing. Ford's action on the national level will allow each individual driver to contribute less pollution to their community every day, and this new equipment will not adversely affect performance and will come to Ford customers at no extra cost, since Ford has agreed to absorb the \$100 per truck cost.

Clean air and a healthy environment benefit each of us and all of our communities. Ford has acknowledged that their industry must be a partner in our efforts to protect and preserve our environment. They are to be commended for this action, and I challenge other car and truck manufacturers to do the same.

This example of the private sector stepping forward and acting on behalf of the environment should be a wake-up call to this Congress as well. We need to do our part by considering rewarding those companies rather than potentially even penalizing them. We must also work together to avoid the debacle that occurred last week with unrelated environmental riders that

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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were added to the supplemental appropriations bill.

Ford's action demonstrated that preserving the environment is a priority for the American people, and that we must do all we can to create an environmental record we can be proud of. I would hope that as we approach further efforts dealing with the environmental protection and, for that matter, the reduction of gun violence, we can avoid the false choices offered by the extreme.

SUPPORT THE SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE "SAFE DEPOSIT BOX"

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow we will consider legislation to ensure that we will no longer use the Social Security Trust Fund for any other purpose than for what it was intended for.

Now, my colleagues might ask, "Why is this necessary?" The answer is quite simple. Despite repeated efforts over the years, we have not been able to stop perpetual raids on the Social Security Trust Fund. We have attempted to stop this violation of the trust fund going as far back as 1990.

Now, that year we enacted legislation, the Budget Enforcement Act, which removed Social Security taxes and benefits from the budget and from calculations of the budget deficit. That was done to prevent Social Security from masking the true size of the deficit and to protect it from budgetary cuts.

The rationale was that if this was done, Congress would not use Social Security in devising the Nation's overall fiscal policies. Historically, the Social Security Trust Fund Board have invested surplus Social Security revenues in U.S. Government securities. These investments are honored just like investments from the private sector. Interest is earned on the monies invested, and returned to the trust fund to help offset long-term obligations to future beneficiaries. It was felt that without such an enforcement mechanism, this practice would continue unless Congress took action to prevent this dishonest bookkeeping from continuing.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the intent of the 1990 law has not been fully adhered to, and to guarantee honesty in budgeting we must end the misuse of Social Security Trust Fund investments. This Social Security Trust Fund surplus should not be used to fund any other programs, and it should not be used to mask our Nation's debt.

We have been very zealous in cutting wasteful spending and reducing the size of our government's bureaucracy. We should keep up our efforts to continue to cut unnecessary and wasteful spend-

ing. That is why I applaud my colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER) for introducing H.R. 1259 which will, among other things, provide a mechanism to ensure that all Social Security surpluses are dedicated to saving the program and Medicare.

I fully endorse this concept and believe we will be fulfilling our pledge to our Nation's seniors if we pass this legislation. We must stop this phoney bookkeeping and leave Social Security money alone. Right now, the trust fund is running a \$126 billion surplus and it is used to mask the yearly deficit.

In 1997, Congress passed the historic Balanced Budget Act of 1997, which of course reduced wasteful government spending. We believed it was a restraint on Federal spending that has led to a reduction in our yearly deficits. With our Nation's strong economy and fiscal responsibility, there has been a strong revenue growth in this country and it has helped the national Treasury. These two factors make it possible to stop the much-used practice of commingling the Social Security Trust Fund money with the general revenue.

So, my colleagues, this week we can make history, make history by standing up for not only what we believe to be right, but what is absolutely necessary if we are going to make good on our promise to save Social Security and Medicare for this and future generations. We can pass H.R. 1259, stop this practice which started when President Lyndon Johnson unified the budget in 1969. It was then that Social Security and the other Federal trust funds were officially accounted for in the entire Federal budget.

So this "Safe Deposit Box Act" establishes the submission of separate Social Security budget documents by excluding outlays and receipts of the old-age, survivors, and disability program under the Social Security Act, thereby, Mr. Speaker, preventing Social Security surpluses from being used for any other purpose other than for the Social Security Trust Fund and the Medicare program.

So I urge my colleagues tomorrow and this week to support H.R. 1259.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 41 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PEASE) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

We pray, gracious God, that Your spirit of comfort and serenity will be with the neediest of people who turn to You with their life's concerns. We remember the refugees of the world and all those who suffer pain or hunger or fear for the days ahead. Remind us all, O God, that when the resources of the world are not with us, we can rely on Your grace. And when people must walk through the roads of danger and hostility, we earnestly pray that Your healing power and Your reconciling spirit will be with them whatever their need or trouble. O loving and eternal God, bless us and all Your people, now and evermore. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from New York (Mr. SERRANO) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SERRANO led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

CHINESE ESPIONAGE

(Mr. WICKER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Speaker, this headline from the New York Times says it all: China Stole Nuclear Secrets for Bombs. Although the bipartisan Cox report on Chinese espionage will not be officially released until tomorrow, we already know enough that all Americans should be outraged.

According to Chairman Cox, the threat to our security from this major intelligence catastrophe will not be years into the future but within the next few months. Look to the Chinese Communist government to begin testing nuclear ICBMs within a few months, using United States nuclear secrets. While our law enforcement officials were asleep, our national security was compromised. It is not just Attorney General Janet Reno. The entire Clinton-Gore administration owes the United States public an explanation for this outrage.

TWO FORMS OF VIOLENCE

(Mr. SERRANO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, the debate goes on in this country as we try